



Morning Alert - Friday, September 22, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

Most networks gave top play to reports on a summit between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea held in New York on Thursday and the announcement by President Trump at the beginning of the trilateral summit that he has signed a new executive order to impose additional sanctions on North Korea that will target companies, individuals, and other entities providing financial support to the North. The networks also reported on a summit between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe, during which they reaffirmed the strong bilateral alliance and agreed to apply maximum pressure on North Korea. TBS led with a report on a new political party to be formed by a close associate of Tokyo Governor Koike.

Top stories in national dailies included the results of a Health Ministry survey showing that the number of diabetes patients has reached 10 million in Japan (Asahi, Yomiuri); the ruling LDP's discussions on election pledges (Mainichi); the FRB's steps toward ending the post-financial crisis response (Nikkei); and new sanctions to be imposed on North Korea by the U.S. (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

U.S., Japanese, South Korean leaders agree to impose maximum pressure on North Korea

NHK reported this morning on the U.S.-Japan-ROK summit and U.S.-Japan summit held on Thursday, quoting Prime Minister Abe as saying at a press conference held after the meetings: "I had a meeting with President Trump and exchanged candid views on the threat of North Korea.... We also confirmed that the United States and Japan are together one hundred percent. President Trump referred to Megumi Yokota during his speech before the UN and sent a message to the world about the importance of the abduction issue. To resolve the abduction and nuclear and missile

program issues we must make North Korea change its policies by imposing maximum pressure on it.... There was also a summit between Japan, the U.S., and South Korea. The three nations will fully cooperate and work closely with the international community to apply the strongest pressure on North Korea to change its policies.” An NHK reporter welcomed the trilateral summit by saying the leaders were able to agree on coordinating their policies in order to impose maximum pressure on the North. Noting that the GOJ was concerned about South Korea’s announcement made ahead of the trilateral summit on its plan to provide humanitarian aid to the North, the reporter said Abe stressed the significance of the summit by saying the ties between Japan, the U.S., and South Korea have strengthened. The NHK reporter also said the leaders of the U.S. and Japan were able to demonstrate close partnership in dealing with North Korea, noting that Abe expressed support for the U.S.’s new unilateral sanctions on the North and appreciation for the President’s reference to the abduction issue during his UN speech.

Abe calls for pressure rather than dialogue on North Korea

All papers reported from New York on Prime Minister Abe’s address to the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, during which he mainly discussed North Korea. The papers wrote that the premier apparently made a policy shift from his previous position of using both “dialogue and pressure” on North Korea by saying that attempts to resolve North Korean issues through dialogue have come to naught. Asahi claimed that Abe’s desire to achieve positive results in the upcoming general election is behind his tough position on Pyongyang in line with President Trump’s stern warning to the DPRK.

South Korea announces humanitarian aid to North Korea

All papers wrote that the South Korean government announced on Thursday that it will provide \$8 million in humanitarian aid to North Korea via the World Food Program and the UN Children’s Fund. The specific timing of the aid will be decided at a later date. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on South Korea’s decision by telling a news conference that it is necessary to avoid taking actions that could undermine the pressure on North Korea when the entire international community needs to step up the pressure on the nation.

POLITICS

Some LDP members express dissatisfaction with planned election platform

Nikkei wrote that some LDP members, including former LDP Secretary General Ishiba, have expressed dissatisfaction with the party’s plan to include such issues as promotion of Abenomics, greater spending for youths, work-style reform, pressure on North Korea, and constitutional amendment in its campaign platform for the general election expected to be held on Oct. 22. These party members are saying that the party has not yet held sufficient discussions on such issues. However, the paper wrote that the rebellion is unlikely to develop further based on the understanding that it would not be wise to reveal a schism within the party ahead of the election.

Keidanren expresses support for LDP

Asahi wrote that during his meeting with LDP Secretary General Nikai on Thursday, Keidanren Chairman Sakakibara expressed the business group's plan to continue to support the LDP by saying that it is important for Japan to have a stable government and that Keidanren will cooperate with the LDP in the upcoming general election.

Wakasa, Hosono to form new party ahead of election

Asahi front-paged a report saying that independent lawmaker Wakasa, an ally of Tokyo Governor Koike, and former Environment Minister Hosono, who recently left the Democratic Party, agreed on Thursday to launch a new party ahead of Sept. 28, when Prime Minister Abe is expected to dissolve the Lower House for a snap election. The new party plans to field as many as 100 candidates nationwide in the general election expected to be held on Oct. 22. On Thursday Koike dismissed the possibility of becoming the leader of the new party, but she is apparently considering playing another major role in the group. Nikkei wrote that the existing parties are paying close attention to Koike's moves based on the view that her involvement in the new party will likely have a major impact on the group's performance in the election.

ECONOMY

11 TPP negotiators select 50 items for review

Mainichi and Nikkei wrote that the chief negotiators of the 11 TPP member states began their three-day talks in Tokyo on Thursday to narrow down the items in the original TPP agreement to be frozen following the U.S. withdrawal from the free trade pact. According to the papers, the negotiators narrowed down the original list of 70 items for possible suspension to around 50 on the first day of the negotiations. Yomiuri wrote that the focus of attention will be whether the 11 nations will be able to reconcile their differences in order to effectuate the new accord and that the negotiations may run into difficulty.

